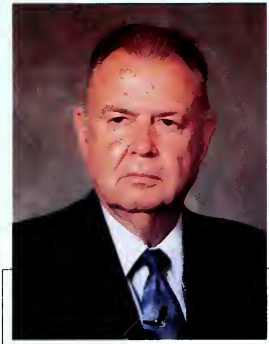
LOUISIANA

Conservationist

November/December 1995 $2.00



Joe L. Herring, Secretary

As this Administration draws to a close, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to all who have taken an interest in and supported the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, not only during the past four years, but over the 30-plus years that I have been a part of this wonderful organization.

I would also like to take a few moments to recap some of our achievements during this current Administration. When I became Secretary, I was immediately counseled by both the Division of Administration and by the Department's own fiscal staff to prepare for a lay-off of at least 36 employees. In my view, the experience and abilities of our employees and their critical value to vital conservation programs made such a lay-off completely unacceptable. We made some hard decisions, consolidated some divisions and activities and avoided the loss of valuable employees and the reduction in services that would have entailed. The Department has held to that positive mindset for four years and it has paid off.

Our Land Acquisition Program has made great progress, adding 31,140 acres to our system of Wildlife Management Areas and Natural Heritage areas across the state. Additionally, the Department has been the grateful recipient of outright donations of 4,876 acres. This additional property bolsters the natural lands already held by the Department for the present and future benefit of Louisiana's hunters, fishermen, campers, birders, nature photographers and others who enjoy the outdoor experience. These lands also ensure that we will always have habitat available for the proliferation of wildlife species native to the Sportsman's Paradise. I am particularly proud that we have finally managed to acquire a significant portion of the old Fisher Tract, now renamed the Buckhorn Wildlife Management Area. That particular acquisition culminates some 40 years of effort by the Department to acquire some of the most outstanding bottomland hardwood habitat in the state.

We managed, against the odds, to re-open and re-vitalize the Lyle S. St. Amant Research Laboratory on Grand Terre Island. The closure of that facility eight years ago left Louisiana as the only coastal state without a marine fisheries research facility. Now we have resumed our place as an authoritative leader in the marine research field and expanded our leadership position in a wide range of fishery management fields.

We are also nearing completion on construction of a 257 acre state-of-the-art warm water fish hatchery which will greatly enhance our fish stocking capabilities for species ranging from bream, bass and catfish to threatened and endangered species such as sturgeon and paddlefish.

I am also very proud of our initiation of the Becoming An Outdoors Woman program. We have held two sessions thus far and a third will be scheduled early in 1996. This program offers an excellent opportunity, and often the only opportunity, for women of all ages to enjoy a comprehensive introduction to a wide variety of outdoor activities ranging from hunting and fishing to canoeing,

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Louisiana Conservationist
ISSN 0024-6778
Volume 47, No. 6
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

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The Louisiana Conservationist is published bimonthly except July/August by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, 504/ 765-2918. Second-class postage paid at Baton Rouge, LA and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: send address changes to Louisiana Conservationist, P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898.

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This public document was published at an average cost of $51,751.60. Approximately 45,500 copies of this document were published at an average printing cost of $23,910.44. The total cost of all printings of this document averages $23,910.44. This document was published for Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70808, by Harvey Press, Inc., to provide information on outdoor opportunities in Louisiana. This material was printed in accordance with the standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to R.S. 43:31. Printing of this material was purchased in accordance with the provisions of Title 43 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes.

LOUISIANA
Conservationist

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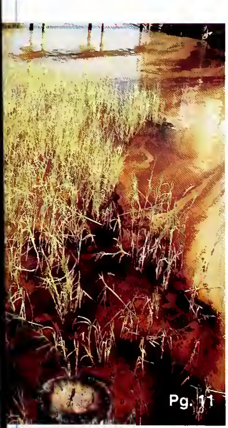
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Back Cover Snowy Egret
By Jerry Hennen

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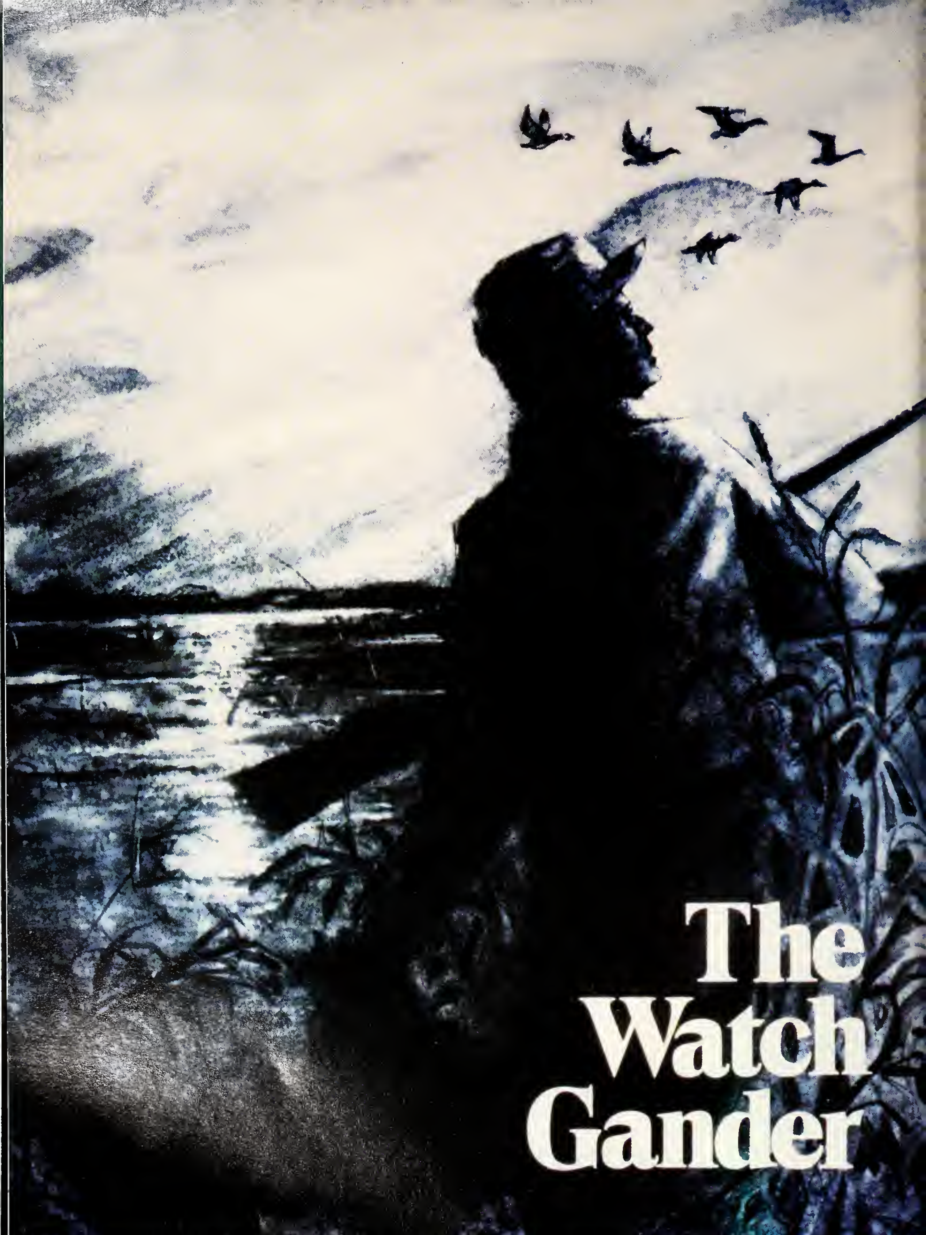
Published by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in the interest of conservation of Louisiana natural resources.



The Watch Gander

Editor's Note: This article first appeared in the November/December 1981 issue of the Louisiana Conservationist.

With the old gander gone, another would take its place. It has been that way for centuries. The new leader of the flock would take them north to their ancestral nesting grounds in the spring and he would spur them southward in the fall.

BY MCFADDEN DUFFY

The hunter crouched in the blind and watched a small flock of Snow Geese moving westward over the sprawling rice fields. He could hear the soft calling of the geese plainly in the cold January air. He made no attempt to call them. The formation did not waver and the flight cadence was rhythmic as the geese climbed higher, the way they do when they are leaving an area.

Another small gaggle trailed behind the first flock, moving in the same direction. The stroking of their wings seemed effortless. The hunter watched them momentarily, then searched the sky for other geese.

Stacked at one end of the blind were three Snow Geese. They had been bagged earlier that morning and were resting neatly side by side, hidden from sight overhead by the tall grass that grew around the edge of the pit blind.

The whiteness of one goose was stained with mud that the sharp north wind had already dried. Death had not been the only indignity for that goose. It had fallen in a boggy place in the stubble.

The hunter paid scant attention to the small flocks of snow geese moving westward from the vast refuge area. As far as he was concerned, his bag limit for Snow Geese had been filled during the first half hour of the hunt. He was watching for White-fronted Geese.

As the man carefully scanned each skein of geese that passed, he rubbed his hands together briskly to ward off the numbing cold. Foolishly, he had passed up an opportunity to fill a small thermos with hot coffee at the camp. The wind had come up during the night, brushing away the scudding white clouds of yesterday and leaving the sky bright blue, clear and cold.

Suddenly he hunched down deeper into the small square pit, his eyes fixed on a small bunch of geese heading generally toward the blind, trailing a larger flock of Snow Geese. They were White-fronted Geese.

"If I can turn those snows a little," he thought, "they'll come closer and the specklebellies might turn with them."

He inched down deeper into the sunken box blind and raised his right hand. Holding his slightly cupped palm as a resonator a few inches from his mouth, the hunter began to call.

The high pitched yelp of a Snow Goose sounded from the blind. He blended in the barking sound that Snow Geese on the ground give. Like many other waterfowlers in southwest Louisiana, he didn't use a caller for Snow Geese. He created the sound with his voice.

The flock of Snow Geese wavered and turned slightly. A few young geese yelped in excitement, but their voices were quickly silenced by raucous scolding. Then the big V continued westward.

The slight turn in direction was what the hunter hoped would happen. As the Snow Geese moved toward the west again they passed within a hundred or so yards of the blind. The trailing Specklebellies had veered slightly when the other geese turned. That slight change in direction would put them even closer to the blind.

In a moment the sound from the blind changed. The high-pitched pleading and persistent yelping and barking of Snow Geese was replaced with the rollicking, boisterous calling of White-fronted Geese. Blended with the rippling calling was a soft gargling sound, that of feeding geese.

The White-fronts turned ever so slightly and dropped a few yards lower. The hunter's pulse quickened. His head was lowered, his eyes were turned upward, his gaze fixed on the approaching geese. There was only a slight, undetectable movement to his shoulders as he worked the Specklebelly caller.

The hunter was after geese in the Sweetlake area of southwest Louisiana. The duck season had closed a week earlier and these final days of waterfowling were for geese only.

It is a prime area of the state for waterfowling, a favorite place in southwest Louisiana for ducks and geese. Part of the fame of the Sweetlake area comes from proximity of those vast marshes and rice fields to Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge.

The refuge sprawls for almost 32,000 acres over some of the best waterfowl marsh in coastal Louisiana. Miles of bayous, canals and ponds lace the tall stands of roseau cane and brown/gold grasses.

Ducks and geese using the refuge in the winter trade back and forth from the refuge each day, feeding in the surrounding marshes and rice fields.

The hunter knew that many White-fronted Geese wintering in southwest Louisiana used the refuge and that was why he'd stopped after bagging three Snow Geese. He wanted two Specklebellies, the most prized geese in Louisiana.

There's something about hunting White-fronted Geese that gets into a man's blood. It is what started the hunter's pulse pounding when he first saw the small flock of Specklebellies. Now that they were headed toward his blind and the more than a dozen molded White-fronted decoys placed realistically near his blind, his throat became dry and a feeling of wild exultation welled up inside him.

The sight of those big Specklebellies he wanted so badly filled him with fierce excitement. The steady, rhythmic beat of their wings could not be mistaken. No waterfowler could ever forget the deceptively powerful wing beat of White-fronted Geese traced against a cold winter sky, their almost effortless speed.

They were now less than a hundred yards away and had seen the decoys, and had dropped lower. Their excited calling contained salutatory notes, a desire to light and feed.

They would be his geese for sure, he thought. Suddenly, they were very special geese and he knew all about them.

There was something very special ab
specklebellies. The hunter wanted th

The jumble of disconnected thoughts racing through his mind crystallized in perfect sequence. His thinking became orderly.

These geese had been born somewhere in that broad, desolate expanse of ice, snow and barren land between the eastern Alaskan border and King Williams Island and the Boothia Peninsula. In isolated spots broken with sparse clumps of grass wet with melting snow and ice, geese had scooped out shallow hollows in the earth and lined them with tufts of grass and lichen.

While the nest building was going on, the ganders stood watch, looking out over the flat tundra with alert and wary eyes. Unlike most waterfowl, the nests of white-fronted geese were widely scattered.

As egg-laying took place almost daily, the geese plucked down from their breasts to insulate the nests that contained pinkish-white eggs. By the time clutches of four to seven eggs were complete, the eggs were stained with mud from the female's feet and perfectly camouflaged.

Although the ganders did not participate at all in the nest building or incubation, they stood resolute guard during the several weeks it took to hatch the eggs.

It was only after the goslings appeared that the ganders took any part in family affairs. Whenever danger threatened, the ganders helped herd the goslings to safety in the grass. The adults taught the young to sneak through the grass and flatten down in the skimpy vegetation to hide themselves.

The geese are stern parents and rightly so. There are many predators, including glaucous gulls which swallow live young less than a week old, arctic foxes, red foxes, eagles and Snowy Owls. Survival depends on being watchful and elusive. Sometimes it takes a stern jab with a gander's bill to send an errant gosling back to the nest area.

The goslings bore little resemblance to their parents. They had bluish bills, feet and legs. Their faces were reddish buff colored. Each had a dark brown stripe that went from the bill through the eye to similarly colored neck and crown. Their backs were light brown in contrast with dark brown rumps and thighs. Their throats and the forepart of their necks and breasts were light colored, their bellies yellow white.

The hunter knew about their nesting in spots picked almost at random in their nomadic wandering, places selected casually but to which they could return in the spring with an accuracy that still baffles scientists and skilled navigators.

The waiting hunter knew how they gathered in early September before the first heavy frosts, rafting on the large open lakes in preparation for migration. And, while they gathered in great numbers, massing and milling about, there was something special in that community of geese that made them different from most waterfowl. In addition to the nonbreeders, the rafts of geese included numerous family groups, adults with fledged and flight-ready young.

And the young geese, though excited by the vast gathering of their kind and the raucous cackling that swelled up from the huge flock each time new arrivals pitched down to join the band, stayed obediently near their parents.

As the long Arctic nights descended on the large flocks, the geese posted sentries. Wise old ganders took up positions around the perimeter of the restless colony, their necks stretched upward and their eyes bright with suspicion, the way geese are when they are watchful.

Stirred by urgings as ancient as time, the geese finally rose from the water where they'd assembled and headed south. Led by their ganders, the family groups of four, five, six or seven joined other family groups and formed ragged Vs in the northern sky. Alternately scolded and encouraged by their parents, the young geese now grown fat on grass and berries quickly learned to maintain proper distance and position in the flight formations. The wavering Vs became more precise and the migration was under way.

Down across the inner reaches of a continent they'd swept, flying at greater height than the young geese had ever flown before. The cadence of their stroking wings disguised the speed at which they moved southward. The 40-mile-per-hour pace seemed measured and slow to people below who watched them partly in awe and partly in envy.

As they migrated southward their flight took them over the wheat fields of Alberta and Saskatchewan, over the farms and towns of northwestern states where the sound of their distant calling stirred restless sleepers and signaled their passing.

Some flights of geese led by their ganders pitched down to rest and graze during the southward flight. Some learned the taste of grain for the first time. When they'd rested and fed, they moved on. Many tens of thousands veered westward to Texas and Mexico. Still other thousands, drawn by the lush rice stubble fields and marshes of Louisiana, continued southward.

As the geese drew even nearer, the hunter crouched in the sunken blind could hear the rippling, deep, laughter-like calling that is so different from the boisterous, scolding calling of Snow Geese. His ears almost rang with the clamor of the oncoming geese.

The hunter was ready for them, hidden in the stubble field near the well-placed decoys. Great care had been taken in the placing of the decoys. For a frantic moment he wondered if anything had been neglected or overlooked, if there was a single thing that could not pass the close scrutiny of the watch gander leading that flight of geese. They were dropping even lower. In a moment the hunter would know if anything was awry.

e lead goose flying point in the fast-approaching V of
tch gander more than any goose he had ever hunted.

As the man waited he thought with lightning speed of a dozen ways in a dozen places waterfowlers had practiced treachery to deceive wild geese.

As the geese dropped even lower, the hunter had a fleeting recollection of something he'd read. It was about the use of bulls in California a generation ago in hunting White-fronted Geese there. How one or two hunters would take bulls that had been specially trained for the purpose and walk them in ever-narrowing circles around a flock of grazing geese. They'd hide behind the slowly moving bulls and when the geese had been herded together and the hunters were within range, they'd jump away from the bulls and fire at the rising geese. It was a practice that could dupe even a cautious watch gander.

The geese were closing rapidly and had dropped much lower. Their orange feet were sagging downward, the way geese perceptively drop their feet when they are about to hover and light.

The hunter's eyes were fastened on the leader. The old patriarch had been fooled, he thought. The gander was about to cup its wings and land just short of the decoy spread.

The hunter remembered something he'd heard years before. Kill the watch gander first, he had been told. It demoralizes the entire flock. They often turn and come back when the gander has been killed.

Keeping your eye on the watch gander can take some doing, the hunter thought. Geese in a decoying flock begin to change positions when they set their wings. I'll have to be careful, he told himself. I can't take my eyes off him for a second.

The hunter wondered how many nights the lead gander had stood guard through the years, his long neck sticking straight up, his head turning from side to side, his brown eyes suspiciously searching the dark night, his keen hearing atune for any alien sound. The hunter wondered how many times in its lifetime the gander had sounded alarm, causing the flock to fly amid scolding protest.

The man remembered in that split second the legend about the Gallic hordes moving on Rome in ancient days. As they advanced on Capitoline Hill, feeding the starving watchdogs to silence them, they stumbled on a gaggle of White-fronted Geese, the European subspecies that breeds on the Arctic coast of Russia. The watch gander alerted the geese and noisy clamor aroused the sleeping Roman garrison. The Gauls were defeated.

There was something very special about the gander flying point in the fast-approaching V of geese. He seemed to the hunter to be slightly larger than the geese flying beside him and somewhat behind him. He was an old goose, the hunter thought.

The man wondered how many times the gander had made the round trip from the northern nesting grounds to southwest Louisiana, not far from the warm Gulf. These geese mate for life, he knew, and he wondered, too, where in that formation was his mate, and how many of their young flew with them this year.

In that almost final moment, the hunter wanted that watch gander more than any goose he'd hunted. He wanted that ancient sentinel who'd stood guard a thousand nights in a thousand places from Boothia Peninsula to the Gulf of Mexico.

Suddenly, the geese broke the powerful rhythm of their flight. A few seemed to miss wing beats. They were getting ready to break formation as they lighted, the way geese do.

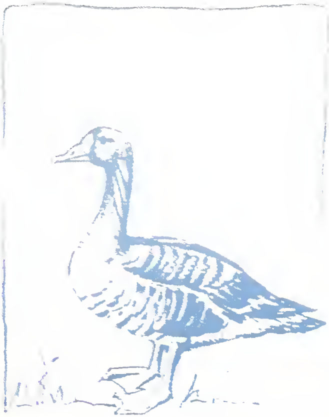
For some reason the hunter will never know, the watch gander flared. Its wings, about to cup for a landing, began to stroke faster. At the same time, the gander sounded alarm. The flowing, rippling chatter of the geese dinned to clamorous protest.

It was too late, the hunter knew, as he rose in the blind and prepared to fire. They were less than 40 yards away. He swung his gun barrel up to the gander, letting it slip several lengths ahead of that white face with the black edging. For that fraction of a second waterfowlers will understand, he swung with that goose but well in front of it.

With a suddenness that would be impossible to explain, the hunter's barrel dropped back to the third goose in the disorderly formation. The gun barrel swung with the hovering goose, then ahead of it as it began to climb. It began falling when the hunter fired. The man did not see it hit the stubble. He was intent on collecting a double.

The hunter got two geese out of the flock but for a moment he didn't look at the fallen geese. Instead he was intently watching the rest of the flock scrambling to regain formation as they rose higher in the cold clear sky. The loud scolding and noisy protest that had filled the air when they flared over the decoys turned to reproachful chatter as they obediently V'd behind the big gander.

The hunter stood silent for a moment, a trace of a wry smile adding emphasis as he nodded respectfully in the direction of the watch gander. ■



Rattlin' & Gruntin'

Photo by Bill Lea

The clash of antlers in the woods can draw curious bucks and does wanting to see the outcome of the battle of strength. Savvy hunters can increase the odds of harvesting a prize rack by taking advantage of this phenomenon.

Talking the Talk During the Rut

BY CHRIS BERZAS

One certainly cannot deny the fact that the white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) is a beloved creature in our Bayou State. The mere sight of an exquisitely antlered deer emerging from a thicket is enough to elicit awe and homage from any viewer.

In fact, the male of the species is so prized that its antlers are regularly found gracing the walls of camps, homes and businesses throughout Louisiana. Although a hunter's bragging right is the chief reason for such display, non-hunters also fall victim to antler veneration.

Such antler adoration is, however, strictly a human experience. In our forests, white-tailed deer do not engage in such misplaced worship. Antlers and horns are simply signposts of an aggressive chain of events commonly encountered by male members of many mammalian species.

The scenario runs something as follows …

A white-tailed doe in estrus will usually be accompanied by a dominant male buck whenever the probability of successful breeding is at its peak. Another antlered buck nearby may be alerted to the receptive doe through her release of secreted chemical messengers called pheromones.

Upon viewing another male intent on drawing his doe away, the dominant buck will commonly become irritable and charge the rival male. Antlers may clash loud and strong during a battle for dominance that may last for seconds or for more than 15 minutes.

During such battles, clashing bucks also emit guttural tones commonly referred to as grunts. Upon hearing these for the first time in the wild, outdoors enthusiasts often mistakenly interpret these sounds as issuing from feral or wild hogs in the vicinity. These grunts can also be heard during the peak of the rut when bucks commonly tend does, as they spend time and energy chasing the female of the species until she becomes a bit more cooperative and placid.

As the sound of an antlered and guttural battle permeates the territory, other nearby white-tailed deer, both male and female members, sometimes approach to observe the event much the same way children rush to view a fight in the school yard. And just as with humans without weapons, such aggression among male deer rivals rarely results in death.

Indeed, such aggression is endearingly viewed by ethologists and comparative psychologists as a bit more adaptive than not, since it encourages fitness among individuals to ensure reproductive success. Subdominant males, although a bit thrashed and wary from the event, are usually run off to search for willing does in other ranges.

Humans, in their quest for venison for the table and antlers for the wall, have become quite adaptive themselves. Finding merit in the claim that imitation is the highest form of flattery, sportsmen throughout the nation have become caught up with hunting paraphernalia resembling white-tailed deer physiology and behavior in both visual and auditory forms.

Photo by Chris Berzas

David Moreland, Deer Study Leader with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), has recently conducted research on the scrape behavior of white-tailed deer in Louisiana. While photographing at a scrape site, Moreland engaged in rattling a set of antlers, enticing an 8-pointer to rush to the vicinity of his cameras.

"I set up, and rattled for two to three minutes and waited," recalled Moreland. "I knew this buck was hanging around the scrapes I was studying, and I was intent on getting a real glimpse of him."

On another occasion, Moreland remembered a successful rattling encounter that resulted in his muzzleloader harvest of a trophy 9-pointer. This was accomplished during what Moreland referred to as the second peak of the rut in the region incorporating his hunting lease.

"Bucks were chasing does in the area I was hunting," said Moreland. "I set up in an area with an active scrape, rattled and grunted for some time, and actually watched a doe curiously head my way. The buck intent on following her came into gun range." This trophy buck now adorns Moreland's office at LDWF headquarters in Baton Rouge.

According to Moreland, the best time to utilize the rattling technique is just before the peak of the rut. This period is commonly referred to as "pre-rut" and will find bucks more aggressive than usual.

Moreland admitted that recent research conducted by Mickey W. Hellickson under the auspices of Larry Marchinton, Ph.D., of the University of Georgia, along with Charles DeYoung, Ph.D., of Texas A&M, has further clarified certain aspects of rattling and white-tailed deer behavior.

"These researchers have found that rattling worked best in two phases, the pre-rut

Forceful rattling has been proven to lure in three times as many bucks as quieter rattling. The best times to attract mature, trophy bucks are the pre-rut and post-rut periods.

and the post-rut periods," claimed Moreland. The scientists also determined that forceful rattling lured in three times as many bucks as quieter rattling. Also, rattling in the pre-rut and post-rut periods was responsible for attracting mature, trophy bucks. The "post-rut" period here is defined as the time when does who were not impregnated during the peak of the rut come into estrus again — usually 28 days following the peak period.

According to Moreland, the researchers' findings correlate with his observations of night visits to scrapes by bucks. More visits are made during pre-rut and post-rut periods than during the peak of the rut. The usual hypothesis to explain these findings suggests that during the peak of the rut, bucks are too busy tending does to worry about checking scrapes or responding to rattling.

In terms of technique, hunters and scientists seem to differ in preference for location and duration of rattling. Loud bursts separated by a few minutes of silence appear to work best. In Louisiana, most hunters employ rattling from tree stands. Moreland admitted, however, that rattling from ground level by a partner while a hunter is perched in the stand may be a better way to harvest deer. This double-team approach allows the hunter to immediately shoot once a buck is observed.

Rattling and grunting are effective because the sounds signal dominant bucks that a competitor has moved into the area.

Photo by Paul T. Brown

The author has had much experience with grunting technique and finds that, in similarity to rattling, both sexes may respond. In fact, I scored on a hefty 150-pound white-tailed doe observed following a spike-buck during a lottery hunt at Tensas National Wildlife Refuge some years ago. Grunting on a manufactured call was the reason the deer came to the vicinity of my stand at 9:30 a.m.

Unlike rattling, the use of grunt calls appears to result in deer attraction through all periods of the rut. One reason may have to do with the fact that bucks emit grunts during the peak of the rut when tending does. The author has found that short guttural sequences separated by a few minutes of silence work well in Louisiana woods.

To say that rattling and the use of grunt calls are becoming popular in Louisiana is an understatement. The last issue of the *Louisiana Conservationist* bears testimony to that fact. James McMurray's 281$^{6}/_{8}$ Boone & Crockett, 30-point nontypical trophy now stands as the biggest buck ever rattled and grunted into range by a hunter in North America. This event happened on Big Lake Wildlife Management Area in Tensas Parish in January of 1994.

When employing these techniques, one must be reminded that bucks have to be present in an area. Stand sites near active scrape sites are prime locations. However, if the deer herd contains too many does, rattling and grunting will not be as successful simply because there are not many bucks around.

Hunters will find well-balanced white-tailed deer populations on most of the state wildlife management areas that are painstakingly managed by LDWF biologists and wildlife specialists. Hunters who employ LDWF's Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) have also benefited from this active management approach.

In those areas with well-balanced, healthy deer herds, the hunter greatly increases his or her chance of success by Talking the Talk in the deer woods. ■

Photo by Jim Hanifen

Oil & Water Mix

BY SARA ANN HARRIS

Photo by Sara Ann Harris

One of the country's most threatened barrier islands has been refurbished by a coalition of oil specialists and wetlands experts.

East Timbalier Island is a 250-acre patch of sand, sediment and marsh grass which flanks Bayou Lafourche to the west. Structures built years ago in the area to facilitate water control caused an early death of this barrier island. Still in its formative years, it was blocked from Bayou Lafourche headland or delta, its land building source. Ordinarily, tides, waves and winds would have swept fine sediment from the headland to create a full arc, which would have later separated from the headland. Barrier arcs commonly then migrate or roll over themselves to form again and again ever closer to the mainland, reform as islands and finally recede to the ocean floor as shoals or ridges. Without the transport of life-giving sands and sediment, the evolution of barrier habitat is aborted and vulnerability to harsh climatic elements intensifies.

Whereas the average rate of erosion to barrier features along the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico is 1.8 meters per year, East Timbalier Island was wasting away at 23 meters annually. In August 1992, the dying island was wounded again when Hurricane Andrew blasted across Timbalier Bay. One month later, a well head burst in the bay emitting 96,000 gallons of oil and an unmeasurable amount of natural gas. It was hard to imagine that East Timbalier Island would ever resume its critical functions as barrier habitat again.

This island is part of 147 miles of barrier features along Louisiana's coast. The barriers serve as wildlife havens. Amid the wash of their Gulf-side beaches, innumerable microorganisms thrive — the essence of fish and bird food chains. It may be no surprise then that Louisiana's islands are the most significant nesting habitat for some sea birds and shore birds on the continent. They also provide resting and feeding sites for millions of neotropical birds and butterflies that migrate across the gulf. Sea turtles trudge up from their watery abodes to lay heaps of eggs on the beaches each breeding season. And the occasional alligator, raccoon, nutria or muskrat family treads the shallow bays to make island homes.

The islands also serve as the first line of defense against storm surges for extremely productive estuaries. At this interface of sea and inland waters, fisheries find spawning grounds like no other. Louisiana's first-class fisheries include menhaden, mullet, shrimp, crabs, oysters, clams, redfish, speckled trout and pompano.

One month after being devastated by Hurricane Andrew, East Timbalier Island received another beating when a wellhead burst in Timbalier Bay and emitted 96,000 gallons of oil and an unmeasurable amount of natural gas.

Photo by Guy LaBranche

Louisiana barriers also protect human communities and municipal infrastructures on the mainland. Families have invested in homes and water and energy systems. Without a barrier against the rigorous coastal climate, the commercial fishing, sport fishing and oil and gas exploration industries would not survive. Industries' success translates to paychecks for wage-earners and dollars for the coffers of municipal, parish and state programs.

Greenhill Petroleum Company, owner and operator of the well, responded immediately to clean up the oil and cooperated with natural resource agencies during every phase of the restoration job. Within two years of the spill, injuries to the ecosystem were assessed, a settlement was reached and new marsh was being created on East Timbalier Island. Approximately 22 acres of vegetated marsh are now completed. The island's resistance to erosion is enhanced and its potential for supporting myriad natural resources and coastal towns easily exceeds that of pre-Hurricane Andrew days.

Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator Roland Guidry represents the governor and acts as liaison between state and federal authorities during a spill response. "Sometimes the government must take punitive action against the responsible party. Relations become contentious," Guidry said. "From the outset at Timbalier Bay, administrators, legal counsel and scientists wanted a collaborative effort. Functions of the responsible government agencies or natural resource trustees were defined and they worked within the appropriate parameters."

Coastal Ecology Programs Manager Jim Hanifen with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has participated in hundreds of spills including the Valdez in Prince William Sound and the Mega Borg in the Gulf of Mexico. "One of the things that very urgently needs to be done at a spill is to get people together — to communicate with each other — at the very least. In some spills that never happens. People are polarized," Hanifen said. He noted examples of spills in which the decision-makers are arguing legal issues to this day. As many as 10 years after some incidents nothing has been accomplished to restore the losses to the ecosystems.

The Timbalier Bay spill was the exception. All parties galvanized to solve the technical problem. As a slick dispersed into the marsh, the first task was to cap the well head. The discharge ignited, emitting burning fumes into the salt air and prohibiting capping for 10 days. Greenhill deployed booms expediently to contain oil and industry mops to soak up the discharge until clean-up was completed.

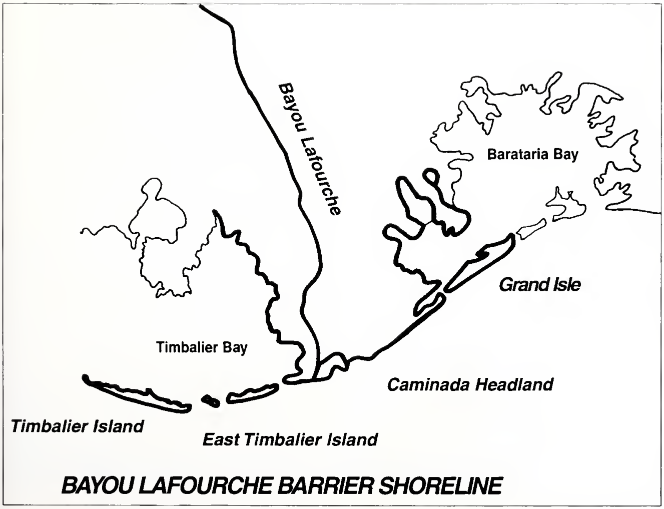
Collaboration was perhaps most beneficial to the seemingly impossible job of calculating injury to the ecological system. Dispersal of oil was facilitated by strong tides and high winds. Restoration Center Program Officer Tim Osborn of the National Marine Fisheries Service explained that the injury assessment team conducted a field survey of the oiled area. They mapped oil distribution and indicated oiling characteristics from very light to heavy. Levels of vulnerability of habitats were determined based on their geological and ecological characteristics. Samples of microorganisms were collected. Using aerial photographs and a recently updated Louisiana coastal atlas, scientists analyzed the evolution of East Timbalier Island to assist in determining what damage had been caused by the spill. Using values from literature, they also made projections regarding rate of recovery of the surrounding marsh.

The estuary is the most biologically productive system in all of nature. The prospect of quantifying impacts to enormous numbers of microorganisms, multiple fisheries, and a significant site for nesting water birds and migratory waterfowl was daunting even to the most knowledgeable and dedicated members of the team. It became clear that the effective method of injury assessment was to relate it to loss of marsh productivity, or its ability to function naturally. Data were compiled using specialized computer software. An innovative graphic depiction of loss of marsh productivity for the duration of oiling and recovery was generated.

"Because East Timbalier was suffering from severe sediment deficit," Osborn explained, "we were concerned with actual loss of marsh vegetation and the underlying substrate or sand." East Timbalier Island itself was identified as the weakest link in the ecological web.

Fourteen months after the spill, a settlement was reached. Greenhill Petroleum agreed to build 21.7 acres of intertidal marsh on East Timbalier Island.

East Timbalier is part of a 50-mile feature originating from Bayou Lafourche approximately 300 years ago, explained Programs Manager Steve Underwood of Louisiana Department of Natural Resources. The Bayou Lafourche Barrier Shoreline also includes Timbalier Island, Caminada Headland and Grand Isle. The natural resource trustees ensured that reconstruction on the island complemented historic barrier formation. Sand and sediment were dredged



East Timbalier Island is one of a chain of barrier islands protecting the Louisiana coastline from the effects of erosion and providing habitat for sea birds, shore birds and sea turtles.

from the bay on the shoreside of the island. Using a hydraulic dredge, land builders were able to simulate natural deposit of the material and place it on target areas at designated levels. Elevation was set to adequately support marsh grass while allowing sediment-laden Gulf waters to wash over the land as they would naturally during high tide but not submerge it. Marsh grass was planted on 100 percent of the new habitat to hold it in place. In addition, earthen berms were constructed on the mainland side of the island and secured with filter cloth and oyster shells to deter the new land from running off into the bay.

"Given the level of expertise of the players, we believe the restoration job of East Timbalier has the best possible chances of succeeding," said Underwood.

The island construction project will be monitored for a total of five years. If damage to East Timbalier Island occurs within two years at the whim of winds or storms, Osborn explained, the corporation must rebuild and replant to ensure 80 percent vegetation.

As many as 10 years after some incidents, damage to the ecosystem still has not been repaired. The Timbalier Bay spill was different, as all parties galvanized to solve technical problems and rebuild a valuable natural resource.

A ripple effect of this successful technical collaboration is already evident. Greenhill Manager of Regulatory and Environmental Affairs John Rosata said, "We learned about the dynamics involved in island reconstruction and preservation. We developed a deeper appreciation for the protection afforded our facilities by the presence of the island and we know why there is concerted effort by federal and state authorities to preserve the barrier islands."

Underwood added, "We learned a lot about oiling in the marsh and what an injury assessment is all about. We learned what kind of coordination is needed to make a response work."

"This project provided a base to anchor additional barrier building jobs on," Guidry explained. In July 1995, a $7 million government-funded marsh creation job was under way to further revive East Timbalier Island. Greenhill continued to demonstrate full support and some of the same natural resource trustees were orchestrating the effort. As oil specialists and wetlands ecologists mix, one of the most deteriorated coastal barriers in the nation is being reconstructed and the potential for other effective wetland restoration work takes root. ■

Guardians of Natural Resources

Louisiana's natural resources are protected by state and federal environmental agencies. Decision-makers, legal counsel and scientists are dedicated to stewarding every animal and plant, the varied habitats that they require to survive and reproduce, and to maintaining the quality of the air they breathe and the water they drink.

In September 1992, an oil well head blew out in Timbalier Bay Field causing leakage into the ecosystem. According to the international community of oil spill responders, the clean-up of the spill and the restoration of East Timbalier Island was a model effort. The major players in the project follow.

Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office. Representing the Governor, LOSCO administrated the response of the three state natural resource trustees and acted as liaison between state and federal authorities.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Provided expertise on living resources (animals and plants) and their habitats. As environmental monitor of oil operations in Louisiana waters, the Department also brought extensive experience in oil spills to the effort.

Louisiana Department of Natural Resources. Provided expertise on the dynamics of tidal marshes and the requirements for restoration of coastal vegetated wetlands.

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. Provided expertise on air and water quality in terms of chemical composition and the presence of metals.

Greenhill Petroleum Corporation. The owner of the well provided leadership in accepting responsibility for the spill. They brought legal counsel and science specialists to the table and coordinated all of the work to rebuild the habitat.

The importance of effective response to oil spills and the international nature of oil transport calls for the involvement of federal authorities. Major programs have been established to address the complex issues of environmental response, compensation and liability, and oil pollution. The designated federal natural resource trustees in this spill follow.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/Damage Assessment and Restoration Program. Provided leadership in determining methods for assessment of injuries to the ecosystem. Provided computer capability to calculate loss and mitigation in terms of acres of intertidal marsh.

NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service's Restoration Center. Provided expertise on coastal vegetated wetlands, the evolution of barriers on the coast, and assessment of injuries.

Minerals Management Service. Provided expertise on living resources, in particular migratory birds and endangered species, and the requirements for their protection.

QUATIC EDUCATION

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY ANDY CRAWFORD

The small group of fifth graders groaned and backed away, revulsion clearly showing on each face as Jonathan Glasscock reached into the fish's belly and pulled out a partly decomposed crawfish. The gamut of childhood expletives was run, including "gross," "yuck" and "nasty." Inherent curiosity quickly overwhelmed them, however, and the children crowded around the table to get a better look at the bass' last meal.

"Crawfish are a favorite meal for bass," Glasscock explained. "We can look at what fish are eating to learn more about the forage base."

Then Glasscock put the crawfish aside, picked up the bass and began pointing out different biological features: intestines, liver, sexual organs. The children hung on every word as he moved through the features of the fish.

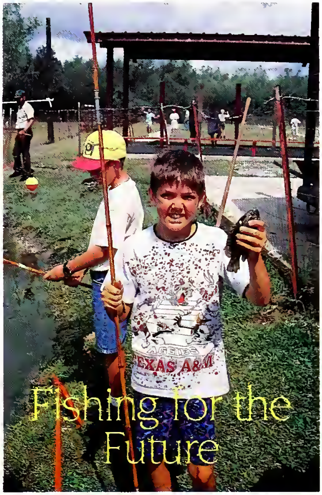
"See this line here?" the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries educator continued, picking up another bass and pointing to a distinct line running the length of the fish. "That lateral line is sensitive to vibrations and allows a bass to feed without seeing its prey. A bass can feel the vibrations of fish and other prey swimming by and know its size and location. This allows bass to feed in total darkness."

When Glasscock was finished, he began a short question-and-answer period to test how well the youngsters had retained the information. There were very few questions the children could not answer.

"This is how you get children to remember what you teach," Glasscock said later. "These kids remember more about fish biology when you provide them with up-close examples and let them see what you are talking about."

The youngsters hugging the small table were a few of the 75 or so participating in a half-day Aquatic Education clinic sponsored in May by LDWF, Bossier Parks & Recreation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Northwest Fly Fishers. About 5,000 Shreveport-area students went through the clinic, which lasted six weeks and included fly casting lessons, fish identification, boating safety and fishing skills.

The clinic has been held annually during the spring or early summer for the past four years and has reached more than 10,000



Fishing for the Future

Using the thrill of fishing as a springboard, LDWF's Aquatic Education Program is teaching thousands of youngsters each year to enjoy and conserve the natural resources of Louisiana's numerous waterways.

children. The school systems in Caddo, Bossier, Red River and Webster parishes have embraced the program and integrated aquatic education lessons into their curriculum.

"The kids enjoy it," said Plantation Park Elementary teacher Michelle Bozeman. "It's something they can enjoy while they are learning."

Fishing is used to heighten this enjoyment. "It's something the kids can do," explained LDWF Aquatic Education Coordinator Paul Jackson. "In Louisiana, we've got so many opportunities to fish that fishing lends itself to children."

But while the children watch their corks and enjoy pulling in bream, bass, choupique and other fish species, they are learning. "You can sneak in and teach them something," Jackson said. "If you teach them the difference between a bluegill and a long-ear and that's the only thing they remember, they walk out with twice as much knowledge as when they began."

Teachers have embraced the program because they are provided with prepared material that fits into their science classes. Teachers in participating parishes are provided an LDWF booklet titled *Let's Go Fishing,* providing activities that can be used to teach fish identification, knot tying, ethics and ecology. These subjects are covered before students participate in the half-day clinic.

Boating safety is important to any aquatic education program. At the course held in Houma this year, Bob Bass of the U.S. Coast Guard taught more than 1,600 children the importance of not only wearing personal floatation devices, but also wearing PFDs that fit.

"The clinic reinforces what they have already learned," Bozeman explained.

Because of the success of the north Louisiana clinic, an additional week-long clinic was begun this year in Terrebonne Parish by educator Jonathan LeBlanc. "I went up there two years in a row and was so impressed that I decided to use it down here," LeBlanc said.

More than 1,600 fifth graders moved through the class in this southeast parish.

One would assume that children in this coastal parish would be familiar with water and our bountiful aquatic life. Surprisingly, many of the children had never even been fishing. "Just because you live close to the Gulf doesn't mean you understand aquatic life, safety and rules of the water," LeBlanc said. "Kids need to be taught."

These parish programs are just parts of the statewide Aquatic Education Program carried out by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' Education Section. The program was begun in 1989 to educate the public on water-related activities and generate interest in conservation of aquatic species and their environments. It was decided early in the program that children were the segment of Louisiana's population upon which to focus.

"It seemed like the most logical way to get our message across," Jackson explained.

Gerald Atkins, an LDWF fisheries biologist who helped at the Terrebonne Parish course this year, agreed that conservation must be taught at an early age. "They retain a good bit of this information," Atkins said. "I believe with continued exposure like this, they will be better environmental watchdogs than we were."

More than 35 parish school systems around the state have incorporated aquatic education into science curriculums. Inner-school activities are facilitated through Aquatic WILD, which provides materials to teachers throughout the state. Although most of these systems simply use the *Let's Go Fishing* guide and other LDWF material to enhance existing courses, Jackson said the exposure of conservation information is worthwhile.

"We expose them at a young age to the importance of conservation instead of preservation," he said. "They begin to learn early that aquatic species must be managed just as deer and turkeys are managed. This teaches them that regulated harvests are not detrimental to the species."

Older children are reached through Marsh Maneuvers, an annual Aquatic Education program that reaches teenagers during their summer vacation. This is the third year of the program, which involves 16 teens in four sessions. The venture is a cooperative effort by LDWF, LSU Extension Service-Agricultural Center, the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program and the LSU Sea Grant College Program.

Selected teens are transported from north and central Louisiana to the Department's Lyle S. St. Amant Marine Lab on Grand Terre Island, where they spend a week learning about wetlands ecology. "These kids have not, for the most part, ever seen an alligator or a brackish marsh," Jackson said.

Students are chosen only after being tested on science, civics and social studies knowledge. This allows participants to be prepared for the week of coastal study.

Activities in which the teens participate include study of estuarine ecology, coastal erosion, water quality and habitat management. Hands-on activities include crabbing and planting cord grass along threatened coastline to slow erosion.

"They learn what the state's marshes have to offer, why they are so important and what steps are being taken to preserve the coastal wetlands that are left," Jackson said. "They then can take this knowledge home and share it with other teenagers."

The successes of Marsh Maneuvers has led to Wild Woods Wandering, during which students from the coast spend a week in the bottomland-hardwoods of Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge learning about that fertile environment. "These programs are designed to teach students about environments and ecology with which they are unfamiliar," Jackson said. "They then learn that all habitats are worthy of protection, not just those where they live."

The future of the Aquatic Education Program lies in the larger cities of the state, although there are no intentions to dismantle the existing program. "Urbanization has meant that more and more people are losing touch with the outdoors, so we need to move to more of an urban setting and develop programs that involve inner-city kids," Jackson said.

LDWF educator Carl Britt is taking steps in that direction in New Orleans. He helps coordinate a one-day youth clinic at City Park each year that reaches as many as 800 youngsters, with more than half from the inner city. "This shows them that they don't have to have an expensive boat to enjoy fishing," Britt said. "To see those kids catch a fish is exciting. It gives them an alternative to the streets."

Jackson said such programs also provide family-oriented activities. "There are mothers wanting to do something with their kids, but they don't know how to fish," he explained. "This program lets them learn the basics with their children."

A critical part of the program is its source of funding. The Aquatic Education Program's $300,000 annual budget is funded entirely through the federal Wallop/Breaux Trust Fund, which is generated through excise taxes paid by recreational fishermen and boaters on fishing tackle, boat gas and other water-related recreational equipment.

Thousands of children each year are exposed to the wonders of fishing because of this fund. And every angler in the state can sit back, catch a few fish and take pride in knowing they play an important role in the future of their sport. ■

Roy Moffett, with LDWF's Marine Fisheries Division, shows a group of Terrebonne Parish students a black drum during the fish identification portion of the Aquatic Education Program.

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BUCKHORN WMA

LDWF photo

Forty Years in the Making

BY BOB LOVE

More than four decades after first attempting to purchase this tract in the fertile Tensas Delta, almost 9,000 acres of prime bottomland-hardwoods finally have been set aside for Louisiana's outdoorsmen.

Louisiana's hunters, fishermen and other outdoor enthusiasts are now enjoying a new Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in the famous Tensas River Basin area of northeast Louisiana. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' (LDWF) Wildlife Division successfully acquired 8,955 acres of prime wildlife habitat in Tensas Parish in June of this year. The tract has become the Department's 45th WMA. This new management area contains some of the best quality bottomland hardwood forest wildlife habitat owned by the Department. The new area was named Buckhorn WMA, after a widely known Tensas area hunting club of the same name which formerly occupied the property.

The new area was immediately opened by the Department to a wide variety of public uses (refer to hunting pamphlet for current season dates). The alternating ridge-and-swale topography on much of this land is interspersed with picturesque lakes and bayous and supports a great diversity of flora and fauna. The property has a traditional history of yielding an abundance of deer, squirrels and rabbits. In fact, at the time of acquisition, Department wildlife biologists believed the deer herd to be in excess of optimum carrying capacity. Among the immediate management objectives of staff members will be the implementation of a sound deer management program to improve the overall health of the deer population.

Another inter-related objective will be implementation of a sound long-term forestry management program. Trees constitute a prime example of a renewable natural resource, and the succession patterns of forests directly impact wildlife diversity and abundance. The forests on the new Buckhorn WMA have not been managed under a comprehensive forest management plan for many years. Although some of the currently forested areas display truly impressive qualities, there are also serious deficiencies. Hardwood regeneration, particularly of oak species, is virtually absent in much of the forest understory. This is due primarily to the forest's closed canopy and prolonged browsing by an over population of deer. The critical inter-relationship between healthy forests and healthy wildlife populations is undeniable.

Due to plentiful wetland areas throughout the new WMA, furbearers such as beaver, river otter and raccoons are quite plentiful, as are alligators, waterfowl and numerous wading bird species. There are also fishing and frogging opportunities on those numerous water resources as well as outstanding opportunities for photographers, hikers and other recreationists.

The general location of the property is also strategic to the long-term goal of creating a corridor of protected, managed habitat for many species, including the threatened Louisiana black bear, a species which currently uses this property. Wholesale destruction of bottomland hardwood forest habitat from the mid-1960s through the mid-1980s reduced the numbers of Louisiana black bears so severely that they are now officially listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. It is believed that the same habitat alteration and destruction during that score of years contributed to the apparent extinction of the Ivory Billed Woodpecker.

Approximately 700 acres of the Buckhorn WMA tract is currently cleared for agricultural use. The Department's management plan includes reforestation of much of this acreage with a diversity of species beneficial to wildlife. This will eventually create an even larger contiguous forested area. Some forest openings will be incorporated into the reforestation plan and maintained as wildlife food plots.

Another group of species that greatly benefits from this new acquisition and whose continued existence depends to a great extent on conserving these remaining tracts of bottomland hardwoods are the many neotropical migrant birds such as warblers. These once plentiful song birds utilize the bottomland hardwood tracts of the Mississippi-Tensas delta as breeding and nesting grounds. A visit to the Buckhorn WMA on any spring or summer month will find a visitor quickly impressed with the chorus of songbirds to be heard and observed. Future plans include the development of a nature trail in one or more designated "natural areas."

The pressing importance of conserving the few and increasingly precious remaining blocks of wildlife habitat in the Mississippi River Delta Region has been stressed by LDWF since the early 1960s. When the Department launched its initial land acquisition program, the first attempts were made to acquire a substantial tract from Fisher Lumber company, which then owned the Buckhorn property. More recently, legislation was passed in 1982 which authorized the purchase by the Department of any or all of Fisher Lumber Company's 57,000 acres in a four-parish area. Since that time, the Department has maintained constant contact with the owners of the property in hopes of exercising its options to purchase. "The consummation of our long-standing interest in this property is indeed

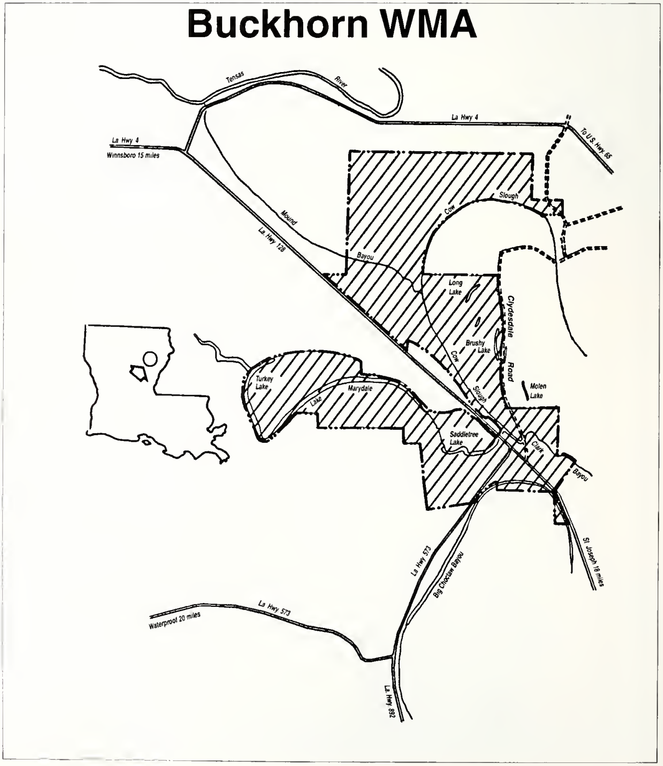
LDWF photo

Buckhorn WMA is home to some of the most magnificent mature forest growth in the state, such as this huge cypress tree.

a major conservation accomplishment in Louisiana," says Wildlife Division Administrator Hugh Bateman.

The acquisition and dedication of wildlife habitat for the Department's WMA and refuge systems is a critical ingredient in the Department's mission as chief steward of the state's fish and wildlife resources. Conservation and protection of habitats such as Buckhorn WMA protects against altered land use and development, thus ensuring the future of our wildlife resources. The Department's WMAs and refuges also provide Louisiana's citizens with a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities and serve as showcase examples of proper soil, water, forest and wildlife management and conservation.

Joe L. Herring, Department Secretary, noted, "This agency's success at land acquisition and restoration of wildlife habitat in this state, and in this region in particular, is perhaps one of our most notable historical accomplishments." To date, the Department has acquired more than 675,000 acres across the state through purchase or donation. Many of these acquisition and restoration projects have been in this rich delta region. ■



LDWF officials quickly established rules and regulations for the newest WMA and opened it to the public for hunting and fishing. Detailed maps can be obtained from any LDWF district office or by calling the Wildlife Division at 504/765-2346.

Photo by Joe L. Herring

NO ROCKING CHAIR FOR HERRING

BY GLYNN HARRIS

The stretch of Highway 167 north of Ruston was familiar to both of us, the man behind the wheel and me. Slowing down, the driver, angular and crew-cut and appearing younger than his 60-plus years, eased the truck off the highway and onto a woods road.

Reaching an old abandoned well site at the end of the road, Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Joe L. Herring stopped his truck, his blue eyes ablaze as if he were viewing something special, for indeed he was.

"This is the spot — right here," Herring declared, as we stepped out onto the weed-choked clearing.

Herring had driven me to this isolated part of Lincoln Parish to show me where, almost four decades ago, the first deer were released to form the nucleus of the teeming herds that now inhabit the area. This was special to Herring because as a young biologist, he was the one who opened the crate on the back of his truck that day in the late 1950s and watched the deer bound away into their new home range.

When the current administration in Baton Rouge changes hands in early 1996, Joe Herring will step down as Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, after nearly half a century of re-introducing deer, Brown Pelicans, wild turkeys, et al across the state.

Don't expect 67-year-old Herring to head for the nearest rocking chair. A man who decided at age six to one day work with wildlife can't just up and quit anymore than Cypress Creek that courses near his boyhood Lincoln Parish home can cease to flow.

"From the time I was 6 years old, when my family moved from Ruston to Shreveport," Herring explained, "I knew I wanted to work with wildlife. I heard about a Ducks Unlimited meeting being held in Bossier City and, having no one to go with me, I attended alone although I was only 9 years old.

"I have had the privilege of working with some of the best in the business over the years..."
Joe L. Herring

"The men there were extremely nice to me, talked to me and told me about DU and wildlife conservation. That meeting really made me more determined to work with wildlife. Before that year ended, I was attending meetings of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation, the Caddo Sportsmen Club, etc."

After completing high school at Fair Park in Shreveport, Herring enrolled at Louisiana Tech to major in wildlife management, earning his B.S. degree in 1949.

Although Herring began his career in his chosen field in 1949, he took time along the way for further college studies at Northwestern State, LSU, Jacksonville State, Centenary and Auburn. Herring's first job after graduation was wildlife biologist for the Alabama Department of Conservation, Fish and Game Division, from 1949 until 1952.

From 1952 until 1954, Herring served with the U.S. Army at Ft. Sill, Okla., where he parlayed his love for wildlife into a biologist position on the base where he worked with research on bison and elk and in fish management.

After his honorable discharge from the U.S. Army, Herring returned to Alabama for one year before accepting positions as wildlife instructor at Northeast Louisiana University and Louisiana Tech.

From 1955 to 1960, Herring worked as a wildlife biologist in the capacity of district supervisor for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). His next job was that of Education Supervisor for the Department from 1960 until 1962, when he was appointed chief of the Fish and Game Division. When Fish and Game were divided in 1972, Herring became chief of the Game Division, serving in that job until 1979, when he was named Assistant Secretary of LDWF.

Retiring from the Department in 1988, Herring worked as a wildlife consultant, a free-lance writer and photographer until Gov. Edwin Edwards chose him in 1992 to head the Department as its Secretary, the position he currently holds and will vacate in 1996.

Looking back on his long career, Herring has no regrets about choosing wildlife as the focus of his life's vocation.

"One thing I look back on with pride is that I started at the bottom as a biologist and ultimately became Secretary of the Department. I have had my hand in virtually every part of the operation of managing fish and game in Louisiana, and that's something for which I am very thankful," said Herring.

"I've had the support of a loving wife, two daughters and sons-in-law, and nine precious grandchildren. In this regard, God has blessed me," a grateful Herring stated.

"I have also had the privilege of working with some of the best in the business over the years, and have had the opportunity to hunt and fish with such celebrities as Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Arthur Godfrey, Shirley Temple Black and Robert Redford, to name a few.

"Some of those I've worked alongside include Dr. Leslie Glasgow, Dr. Ted Rord, Dr. George Lowery, L.D. Young, Burt Angelle, Richard Yancey, John Newsom — the list could go on and on," Herring continued.

In fact, Herring, in consort with Dr. Leslie Glasgow, was instrumental in returning the Brown Pelican to the "Pelican State" after Louisiana's state bird had virtually disappeared from our coast.

"When the Brown Pelican disappeared from the Louisiana coast, Dr. Glasgow and I went to Florida on our own to see if we could get some birds for release in Louisiana," Herring recalled.

"We visited the rookeries there and made arrangements to transport Brown Pelicans to Louisiana. Over the next few years, we were able to procure 1,200 of the birds. Today, I'm proud to report the population of Brown Pelicans in Louisiana is more than 25,000."

Another project in which Herring played a key role was that of saving the Louisiana black bear.

"During the 1955 bear season in Louisiana, a hunter killed a sow bear and her three cubs. Incredibly, the man was within the law to do that because there was no limit set on bears back then," Herring explained.

"After this incident, I went before the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission and recommended that the Louisiana black bear season be closed until research and scientific data enabled us to get a better handle on seasons, bag limits, etc. The Commission agreed and, to this day, there remains a closed season on the Louisiana black bear."

Recalling the deer he helped release in Lincoln Parish and in other parts of the state, Herring is particularly gratified in the overwhelming success of this restocking project.

"In the 1950s Louisiana probably had less than 5,000 deer concentrated over only 8 percent of the state. This means that 92 percent of the state had no deer at all," said Herring.

"Today, hunters are harvesting about 100,000 deer per year all over the state. Now, the harvest in one day is equal to the entire population in the 1950s. I'd call that progress.

"It was a big event back then when word got out that we were bringing deer to release in an area. I remember one release we made near Golden Meadow of deer we had trapped in north Louisiana. We got to the release site well after midnight and, to our surprise, there must have been 150 men, women and children waiting to see the deer released."

Not only has Herring played a major role in ensuring healthy populations of pelicans, deer, striped bass and wild turkeys to the state, he was even involved in helping design the current modern state office building that houses the state's Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in Baton Rouge.

"Over a two-day period, Secretary Burt Angelle and I visited Arkansas, Missouri, Kentucky and Tennessee to take a look at their facilities. We went over the good and the bad features of each building and when we returned to Baton Rouge, I prepared a report for our architect. The result is a building we're proud of, one that is not only attractive to look at but practical and user-friendly as well," said Herring.

Photo by Glynn Harris

Joe L. Herring surveys the site of the first releases of deer during LDWF efforts to restock white-tails in 1960.

Among the host of other projects and programs that have been completed or begun during Herring's tenure, and for which he is especially proud, is the new fish hatchery under construction at Woodworth.

"Louisiana has fewer acres in fish hatcheries than any state in the southeast, maybe in the nation. The new hatchery we're building will modernize fish production in Louisiana. Not only will we be able to raise such popular species as black bass, Florida bass, bream, crappie and catfish, we will also be able to raise some endangered species of fish such as sturgeon and paddlefish. I'm hopeful that we'll be producing fish at our new hatchery in 1996," said Herring.

With all the successes Joe Herring has had over the past four-plus decades of wildlife work, there are some concerns for the future that trouble the Secretary.

"Hunting and fishing are undergoing change. The days when a youngster can come in after school, pick up his .410, slip out in the woods and kill a rabbit, squirrel or quail or two before dark are just about gone.

Photo by Joe L. Herring

Herring was involved in most LDWF restocking efforts, including turkeys (above) and black bears (below).

Hunting areas are growing increasingly scarce," said Herring, "and our growing population means that those places are growing even more crowded.

"The percentage of hunters is not growing in proportion to the population, and I feel there are several things that are contributing to this. One is the leasing of land which means that if you're not a member of a hunting club, your chances of hunting on other than a wildlife management area are slim.

"As it becomes increasingly difficult to find a place to hunt, many will just give up the sport and when this happens, we lose revenue from the sale of hunting licenses and matching federal funds derived from excise taxes on guns, ammunition and other hunting equipment.

"Another thing that concerns me," Herring continued, "is the increase in regulations put on hunters and fishermen. The majority of those regulations are not our (LDWF) regulations, but those the sportsmen think they should have to regulate their sport. In some cases, the sportsman has just about been restricted out of business in the name of conservation and protection.

"A good example," Herring pointed out, "is baiting regulations for doves. These confusing rules are probably running off more good sportsmen than any other. I've had hunters tell me, 'Joe, I think I'll go back to playing golf. I'm afraid of doing something wrong while I'm hunting and I can't afford a violation on my record.' This is sad when confusing rules frighten off our hunters.

"Another thing I've seen is the loss in recruitment of new hunters. Over the past 10 years, Louisiana has lost more than 100,000 licensed hunters which, of course, means that the Department's budget has taken a severe hit.

"The main loss is in those youngsters who never get into hunting. Many of these are in one-parent homes, and statistics tell us that in 1970, 12 percent of our nation's children lived in one-parent homes. Today, that figure has mushroomed to 27 percent. I have to be frank — this is of great concern to me," a solemn Herring noted.

What will the future be for Louisiana's hunting and fishing? Come 1996, someone else will take over the helm of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and the burden will be on his shoulders.

You can bet, though, that Joe Herring won't be rocking away his time, content to let the new guy worry about it. He envisioned at the tender age of 6 that his life's work would be with wildlife.

I have a sneaking suspicion that he is silently hoping and praying that somewhere, another fresh-faced, clear-eyed 6-year-old is, even now, grabbing onto the vision that, more than 60 years ago, set the course for the life and career of Joe L. Herring. ■

Editor's Note: Glynn Harris of Ruston had a special interest in writing this story on Joe L. Herring. Harris' father, T.E. "Doc" Harris, was Predator Control Supervisor for LDWF for a number of years under the supervision of Herring, and "Doc" was one of Herring's favorite co-workers. Glynn Harris has written a book, "Talkin' Outdoors," a collection of outdoor essays. For a brochure, write Harris at P.O. Box 1102, Ruston, LA 71273.

Photo by Joe L. Herring

SECRETARY'S COMMENTS, continued from page 2

camping, birding and nature photography. I am hopeful that this series will become a permanent, ongoing function of our Department.

Construction has been completed on the Department's Environmental Education Center at Woodworth and the value of such teaching and training facilities is clearly evident. Plans are now under way for our second center. That facility will become a nature center and educational facility second to none in the nation. The 180-acre Waddill Tract, located along the Comite River off Flannery Road in Baton Rouge, will offer a wildlife interpretive center, nature trails, general conservation and environmental education facilities and, very importantly, well-stocked mini-lakes to make fishing opportunities available to our urban youngsters and senior citizens who currently do not have access to angling opportunities. Such centers have become vitally important tools in meeting the Department's obligation to provide meaningful recreational and educational opportunities for all of our citizens.

I also want to notify all of you that we are in the process of publishing Louisiana's first wildlife viewing guide. This will be an excellent, full-color tool for anyone with even a casual interest in the fabulous diversity of wildlife to be enjoyed in our Bayou State. It will detail various habitat types, flora and fauna to be found in each, the location of carefully selected primary viewing sites throughout the state, and facilities available at each site.

As I prepare to leave the Department to which I have devoted most of my professional life, I am happy to report to the people of Louisiana that all of our game species are in very healthy shape with abundant populations and greatly improved habitat, particularly on property owned or managed by your Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. There has also been an increased environmental awareness on the part of the general public and much progress in habitat restoration and improvement on thousands of acres of private property.

Similarly, our marine species are also in abundance. Speckled trout and redfish, for example, have rebounded vigorously from damage suffered during several severe freezes. Our oysters are in great abundance, despite marketing difficulties arising from media "scares" concerning the health aspects of consuming oysters.

Only our blue crab harvests are depressed and this is a phenomenon, as yet unexplained, afflicting the Atlantic and Pacific coasts as well as the Gulf of Mexico.

In closing, I would like to offer this admonition for the future. Adequate financing will be the greatest hurdle facing your Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in the years to come. We have proven beyond doubt that we can successfully cope with habitat protection and enhancement and proper game and fish management. The past half-century has produced magnificent advances in restoring clean water and air, and in managing man's activities to ensure that our fish and wildlife resources will remain viable. The people, however, will have to decide if this Department will continue to protect, replenish and restore wild habitats and the species dependent upon them.

Without strong and widespread public support, both political and financial, all the efforts and gains of the past half-century will have been in vain. A well trained and highly motivated staff of conservation professionals is an absolute necessity, but just as importantly, they must be provided with the facilities, equipment and funding to continue the battle to protect and conserve our natural resources for future generations.

The greatest key to that effort will be the Department's informational and educational activities. Those efforts must be restructured and expanded until we can readily and consistently reach every segment of our population. The people of Louisiana will inevitably support our efforts, but only if they KNOW not only what this Department is doing, but also WHY it must be done!

RIGS TO REEFS

FOURTH MARINE FISHING MAP NOW AVAILABLE!

The latest in a series of six coastal fishing maps is now available. Map 4 extends from Sabine Pass to White Lake and the surrounding Gulf waters. The first three maps are still available. Map 1 covers coastal waters from Venice to Fourchon. Map 2 extends from Fourchon to Point Au Fer. Map 3 shows the Chandeleur and Mississippi sounds, Lake Borgne and a Portion of Lake Pontchartrain. Each map is full-color and measures 25" x 38". Features illustrated include artificial reefs, oil and gas platforms and state/federal fishing line, plus tips for executing a successful fishing trip.

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Education Corner

NATURE INVESTIGATION

BY AMY OUCHLEY & GAY BRANTLEY

Hi! Today let's explore hunting. The more you know about this sport, the safer and more successful you can be. (*All underlined words can be found in the glossary at the end of the second page.)

Fall is one of the best times of the year to be outdoors. The air is cool and wildlife is active. Animals are gathering food and preparing for winter. Hunting allows us to enjoy our natural resources and make new discoveries. In some cases hunting helps prevent overcrowding of wildlife. Harvesting some animals allow the remaining wildlife to have more food in the winter and be healthier to raise young in the spring.

Below are activities filled with information about the sport of hunting.

HUNTER'S WORD SCRAMBLE

Directions: Unscramble these words to complete the sentence.

1. (MEGA) ____________ is a word for animals that can be hunted legally.

2. (TSRAENL) ____________ are the bone-like growths that fall off and grow back each year on the head of white-tail deer.

3. An animal's home must include enough food, water, shelter and space in the proper arrangement. Another word for an animal's home is (BTAHI-TA)________________.

4. Being a (AFES) ___________ hunter can help you be a more successful hunter.

5. Squirrels eat a variety of seeds, nuts and berries. This food is called (TMSA) _____________.

6. At certain times of the year quail live in a small group called a (VYEOC) _____________.

7. An animal that blends into the environment and is difficult to see is ________________ (MFACOGEALUD).

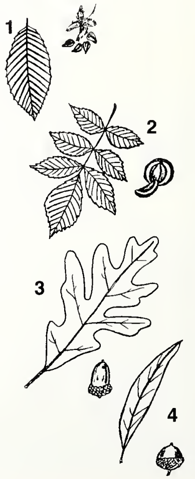
8. White-tail deer eat the twigs and leaves of plants. This kind of wildlife food is called (WSOBRE) ______________.

9. Ducks and geese are called (FWTRWAEOL) _____________________.

10. A popular bushy-tailed game animal in Louisiana is the (QERRUSLI) _________________.

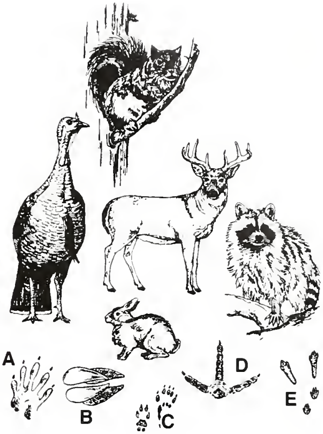
Can you identify the trees that produce mast (nuts) used by wildlife for food?

White Oak ____
American Beech____
Willow Oak ______
Hickory _______



* Answers to Word Scramble are at the bottom of the next page.

MATCH-A-TRACK



Good hunters look for animal sign. Tracks are sign that tell you game is in the area. Here are some of the most popular game animals in Louisiana. Identify the animals. Match the tracks each animal makes with the clues.

1. Squirrels are good climbers and have small feet with four toes and claws on the front foot and five toes on the back foot. ____

2. White-tail deer have a divided hoof on each foot and are swift runners. ____

3. Rabbits have large rear feet, a feature for running and hopping. ____

4. The front paw track of a raccoon looks like a miniature human hand print. ____

5. A wild turkey leaves a long three-toed track in the sand. ____

HONE YOUR SENSES

When you are in the woods hunting, observe everything around you. Notice the stump covered with moss and fungi where a squirrel has gnawed hickory nuts, a spider's web sparkling in the sun, the musky smell of damp earth and the sound of leaves crunching underfoot. There are many things to investigate. You can have a great hunt without always taking home game.

Another way to learn about hunting is to attend a hunter safety course sponsored by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries with your mom or dad.

Good hunting! See you on the next Louisiana Nature Investigator page.

GLOSSARY

Hunting - Legally pursuing and sometimes harvesting wildlife (game) for food or sport.
Natural Resource - Useful raw materials supplied by the earth and its processes. Natural resources include nutrients, minerals, water, plants, animals, etc.
Sign - Any indication that an animal has been in the area such as tracks, droppings or food remains.

Answers to Word Scramble: 1. Game, 2. Antlers, 3. Habitat, 4. Safe, 5. Mast, 6. Covey, 7. Camouflaged, 8. Browse 9. Waterfowl, 10. Squirrel; **Answers to tree identification:** 3, 1, 4, 2; **Answers to Match-A-Track:** C, B, E, A, D

LAW LINES

Behind the Badge

BY CAPT. KEITH LACAZE

Review of New Hunting Laws

The 1995 Session of the Louisiana Legislature passed several laws which will affect hunters in this state. In addition, changes in some current regulations were adopted. Many of the new regulations will be in effect during the 1995-96 hunting season.

Not all of the new legislation will concern hunters statewide and space does not allow us to list every bill involving the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Instead, we can review five new laws and briefly explain their significance. These laws affect hunter safety and education, provide for a mandatory wild turkey stamp, further define caliber restrictions on rifles, add Operation Game Thief to state income tax checkoffs and enhance primitive weapons hunting.

The first is House Bill No. 584 by Rep. Rodney Alexander, Quitman. This bill adds to our existing hunter safety law. Present law requires anyone born after Sept. 1, 1969, to have a certificate of satisfactory completion of a firearm and hunter education course taught or approved by the Department before hunting with a firearm. The new law adds the following: "However, a person under sixteen years of age may hunt without such certificate if he is accompanied by and is under the direct supervision of a person who is 18 years of age or older." The law further empowers the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to adopt rules to define the circumstances that constitute a person being accompanied by and under the direct supervision of another. Hunters under the age of 16 who do not have a hunter safety certificate must now be under the direct supervision of an adult while hunting with any firearm. The bill went into effect on Aug. 15, 1995.

House Bill No. 777 by Rep. Sean Reilly, Baton Rouge, et al, provides for the Louisiana Wild Turkey Stamp, the Louisiana Wild Turkey Stamp Fund and its purposes. The stamp is now mandatory in addition to a basic and a big game hunting license for anyone, 16 to 60, who hunts turkeys in this state. The resident fee is $5.50 and the non-resident fee is $10.50. The stamp must be signed on its face by the person to whom it is issued and will be required for the 1996 spring season and thereafter.

Money generated by sales of the wild turkey stamp will be used "to acquire lands in Louisiana which have the primary and direct purpose of conserving, restoring and enhancing wild turkey habitat; to carry out wild turkey habitat restoration and enhancement projects on lands under the jurisdiction of the Department; and to acquire lands that are suitable for wild turkeys and wild turkey management.

Non-residents from Texas, Arkansas and Mississippi may hunt turkeys in Louisiana without the Louisiana Wild Turkey Stamp if the person possesses a wild turkey stamp issued by the other state.

The third bill for our review is House Bill No. 1107 by Rep. Dennis Hebert, Ponchatoula. This bill defines the "standard .22 caliber rimfire" as any rimfire .22 caliber, including short, long, long rifle or .22 magnum. Standard .22 caliber rimfire does not include any .22 centerfire cartridge. The term "standard .22 caliber rimfire" appears in several places in wildlife and fisheries law and debate has raged over the years as to whether the .22 magnum caliber was "standard" or not. This bill settles the debate and includes the .22 magnum in the list of standard .22 rimfire cartridges.

Our fourth bill is House Bill No. 1613 by Rep. Charles Riddle, Marksville, and Rep. Sam Theriot, Abbeville. This legislation authorizes the listing of Louisiana Operation Game Thief as a donation checkoff on state individual income tax returns. In part, the bill reads as follows: "Every individual who files an individual income tax return for the current tax year and who is entitled to a refund may designate on his current year return that all or any portion of the total amount of the refund to which he is entitled shall be donated to Louisiana Operation Game Thief Inc., in lieu of that amount being paid to him as a refund, in which case the refund shall be reduced by the amount so designated. The designation shall be made at the time of the filing of the current year tax return and shall be made upon the income tax return form as provided by the secretary of the Department of Revenue and Taxation..."

Money from income tax donations will be appropriated by the legislature to Louisiana Operation Game Thief Inc. and will be used by OGT solely for the purpose of paying cash rewards for information leading to the arrest of wildlife violators. This is a most worthwhile cause and anyone who believes in protecting and conserving our wildlife resources should consider donating all or part of their refund to OGT. The funds are badly needed and the checkoff will be on the 1995 tax forms.

The final bill for our discussion is Senate Bill No. 306 by Sen. Joe McPherson, Woodworth, and Sen. James David Cain, Dry Creek. It provides for the taking of squirrels and rabbits with muzzle loaded rifles of .36 caliber or less. Prior to passage of this bill, taking squirrels and rabbits with any rifle larger than standard .22 caliber rimfire was illegal. The law unintentionally banned squirrel and rabbit hunting with small caliber muzzleloaders. Effective Aug. 15, 1995, the use of these primitive firearms became legal.

For more information about hunting and fishing regulations, contact your local regional office of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Dates for the upcoming hunting season and other information can be found in the 1995-96 Louisiana Hunting Regulations pamphlet, available wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold.

Practice gun safety at all times and take a youngster hunting or fishing whenever you can. ■

Black-bellied Tree Duck

BY CLIFTON COLES

Louisiana hosts some of the most interesting birds in the world during the annual migrations. Probably the most uncommon to this area is the Black-bellied Tree Duck, a most un-ducklike duck.

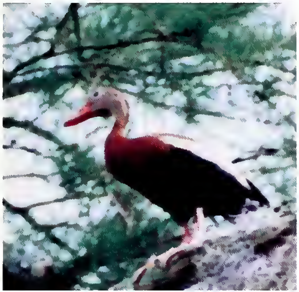


Photo by Charlene Beauclair

The Black-bellied Tree Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) is a most un-ducklike duck. Its generic name, *Dendrocygna,* means tree goose, and this is an apt description. With its long feet, legs and neck, it looks more like a goose than a duck. It is a close relative of the Fulvous Tree Duck (*D. bicolor*), but is larger and more distinctly colored. General body coloration is grayish brown above and black below, with a red bill and pinkish legs and feet. The underwing is black, sharply contrasting with the white upper wing, which has a black band.

Also called the Black-Bellied Whistling Duck, this species is quite noisy in flight. A colloquial name in Mexico is "Pichipichi," an imitation of this duck's peculiar call.

Black-bellies are mostly tropical coastal ducks, living on the Gulf and Pacific coasts of Mexico south to Central America. They are known to breed and migrate along the Gulf coast to Texas, where they feed in rice fields. As Louisiana has expanded its rice-growing, the ducks have expanded their territory.

"In terms of their natural range, they're not supposed to be here," said Jimmy Emfinger, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries waterfowl biologist. "They've been seen in a number of different places in Louisiana, but in general sightings are few and far between."

Emfinger noted a long-standing but isolated population at Lacassine National Refuge (Cameron Parish), but this bird is considered extremely rare anywhere else in the state.

"We found the first nest in 1990," said Steve Emmons, assistant refuge manager at Lacassine. "They were using Wood Duck boxes." Emmons noted competitions between Black-bellies and Wood Ducks for nesting sites. "We average probably two to three dozen birds, but the population here may be larger."

The pictures at left and right were taken in May 1995 by Marksville's Charlene Beauclair in her back yard near Spring Bayou Wildlife Management Area. "I was in the house, and I could hear a racket like you wouldn't believe," she said. "I came out and saw about seven or eight — I'd never seen them before. They flew from tree to tree and looked like they were lost."

They may have been. Marksville is at the very fringe of the Black-belly's range. Where they came from remains a mystery, and Beauclair and her neighbors haven't seen any since. This sighting may be a once-in-a-lifetime event, a new occurrence of the Bayou State's wondrous natural diversity to celebrate. ■

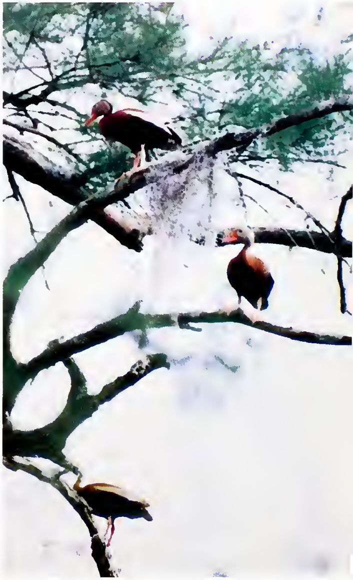


Photo by Charlene Beauclair

CONSERVATION notes

Military Steel Enhances Artificial Reef

Forty armored personnel carriers, equalling 500 tons of steel, have reached their final destination, providing additional aquatic habitat in the Gulf of Mexico. The U.S. Department of Defense donated the Vietnam-era equipment to the Louisiana Artificial Reef Program, providing hard surfaces for encrusting organisms that form the basis of the food chain for Gulf fish. On Sept. 19, 1995, the APCs were sunk in about 100 feet of water about 28 miles southwest of Fourchon.

"Instead of piling them up at one location, we spread them out to maximize benefits," Rick Kasprzak, coordinator of the Louisiana Artificial Reef Program, said. "Natural reefs are scarce within 100 miles of Louisiana's coast, so we wanted to provide as much hard surface as possible."

The donation came through the Department of Defense's REEFEX program, in which out-of-service equipment is used to create fish habitat in coastal states. Until placement of the APCs, only oil platforms donated by the petrochemical industry had been used to create or enhance artificial reefs in Louisiana.

Louisiana Coastal Map #4 Available

The latest addition to the popular series of coastal and offshore fishing maps published by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is now available. This full-color map covers the Louisiana coast from Sabine Pass at the Texas state line eastward to White Lake in Vermilion Parish. It is the fourth in a series of six maps completed by the Louisiana Artificial Reef Program designed to span the entire state coastline and provide regional information for recreational fishermen.

All four of the two-sided full-color maps provide information on locations of oil and gas platforms and artificial reefs, fish identification guides, angling tips and boating safety rules. Fishing marinas and boat launches are identified and keyed, and water depths are indicated.

Map #1 highlights the Louisiana coast around Venice and extends west to Fourchon. Map #2 extends from Fourchon west to Point au Fer. Map #3 details the coast from the western portion of Lake Pontchartrain eastward and southward to Chandeleur Sound.

Each map is available for $11, plus $3 for handling. Each measures 25 inches by 35 inches and is available either rolled or folded.

Anyone interested in purchasing any or all of the four available maps may write Rigs to Reefs Maps, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, La. 70898-9000; or call 504/765-2934. Maps may also be purchased at Department headquarters (room 118) 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge.

Student Internship Available

A paid internship is being offered for the 1996 spring semester to journalism students interested in fishing and/or hunting.

The 20-hour per week position is being offered by the *Louisiana Sportsman* magazine. Work will include writing, copy editing and production.

Applicants must be full-time college students majoring in journalism. Interested students should send a short letter explaining why they would like the internship to: Todd Masson, Editor, P.O. Box 1199, Boutte, 70039.

Iris Painting Available

Claude Houchin's painting of Louisiana irises depicted on the 1995-96 Wild Louisiana Stamp is available on posters and prints. This distinctive artwork makes a charming addition to any collection, adding a dash of color and beauty to the walls of any room.

The painting depicts a stand of purple Louisiana irises in a freshwater wetland. Irises dot the tall grasses along a river bank in the background and stand out against the base of a tree in the foreground. It is reproduced on page 23 of the last issue of the *Louisiana Conservationist.*

The image is available in several editions, each including a signed and numbered print with one stamp. Print size is 6.5 inches by 9 inches. Posters measure 18 inches by 24 inches.

LDWF's Natural Heritage Program, responsible for the Department's watchable wildlife, endangered species and land stewardship programs, receives 15 percent of each poster and print sale.

Write Houchin's Custom Framing, 7568 Bluebonnet Blvd., Baton Rouge, La. 70810, or call 504/769-8067 for a list of prices and available editions.

Louisiana Conservationist Gives Discounts to Schools

Schools statewide can now receive a 20 percent discount on the *Louisiana Conservationist* magazine and the Official Wildlife & Fisheries Poster series. This offer is valid for all public, private and parochial schools in Louisiana.

In keeping with the mission to inform and educate Louisiana, the *Louisiana Conservationist* is offering all educational institutions the opportunity to receive these materials at a discount as a means of getting the message into the classrooms. The *Louisiana Conservationist* magazine and the wildlife and fisheries posters are excellent teaching tools for classrooms and libraries.

Regular subscription rates for the magazine are $10 for one year, $18 for two years and $30 for four. The wildlife and fisheries posters begin at a regular charge of $4 per poster and decrease to $3 per poster with a purchase of seven or more. The discount will apply only to the cost of the merchandise, not to the total sale, which includes shipping and tax.

To receive this discount, a request must be on school letterhead signed by the teacher or school administrator and orders will be shipped to the school. Order forms for these two items can be located on pages 18 and 34 of this issue. Additional questions can be directed to the *Louisiana Conservationist,* P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898 or call 504/765-2918.

Agents of the Year Named

Lt. Pat Drury of Chalmette was designated 1995 Agent of the Year and Sgt. Joseph Broussard was named 1994 Agent of the Year by the chief of LDWF's Enforcement Division.

Drury has served in the Enforcement Division for 18 years, including 10 years as supervisor for District 8B. "Under Lt. Drury's leadership, there has been a significant reduction in violations across the board in District 8B over the past five years" said LDWF Capt. Irvin "Sandy" Dares. "He is well-known for his knowledge of the law, the people in his area and the complex marsh areas in his district. He has earned respect as a game warden who has the experience and knowledge to beat violators at their own game."

Broussard joined the force in January 1991 and works in Region 6, in south-central Louisiana. In addition to his other duties, he serves as Region 6 boating safety instructor and board member for the Louisiana Wildlife Agents' Association. "Sgt. Broussard demonstrates exceptional abilities as a field activities coordinator and consistently manages a high case load," said LDWF Col. Winton Vidrine. "He is called upon to assist as an instructor at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Law Enforcement Training Academy and provides an excellent role model for incoming cadets."

Comeaux Awarded Certificate for Valor

LDWF Enforcement Agent Chuck Comeaux was recognized by the North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association for his 1994 rescue of two people. The association awarded Comeaux their lifesaving award for saving a woman and her 6-year-old daughter, who were trapped underwater in an overturned vehicle on Hwy. 308 in Lafourche Parish on June 3, 1994.

LDWF Enforcement Capt. Keith LaCaze presented Comeaux with the association's certificate at the Aug. 3, 1995, meeting of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission.

"Comeaux administered C.P.R. to the woman and her daughter and both are alive today thanks to his training and valor," said LaCaze.

Fishermen Support Hatchery Managers

Anglers donated $5,000 to an LDWF research cooperative founded to certify the use of eight drugs at state fish hatcheries. These drugs control parasitic, bacterial and fungal diseases. Louisiana Bass Hatchery, a fisherman's group incorporated in 1992 to promote stocking bass in public waterbodies, was commended at the August meeting of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission.

Thirty-two states and two federal agencies contracted to fund the $8.9 million five-year research project. July 1, 1995, marked the onset of year two. Each state must contribute $20,000 annually. The Department uses $15,000 of Federal Aid to Sport Fish Restoration Funds and is required to provide $5,000 in a state match.

"We approached several sports clubs and aquaculture associations for the needed money last year," said LDWF Inland Fisheries Division Programs Manager Arthur Williams. "The good folks at Louisiana Bass Hatchery responded quickly.

Use of these chemicals will result in reduced disease and improved quality of fish.

Lifetime Licenses

Scandurro, Stephen O.	Harahan
Serpas Jr., Frank E.	Chalmette
Smith, Kenneth R.	Houma
Spitale III, Santo S.	Morgan City
Spitale, Louis M.	Morgan City
Summers, Michael G.	St. Francisville
Sutherlin Jr., William E.	Baton Rouge
Templet, Eric A.	Zachary
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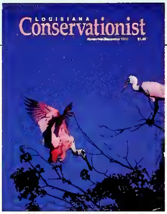

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Bayou Kitchen

BY WAYNE MILLER

Photo by Ken Glaser

Crispy Apple-Pecan Bake

- **2 1 lb. 5 oz. cans apple pie filling (or equivalent prepared from fresh baking apples)**
- **2 cups rolled oats**
- **½ cup raisins**
- **1 cup chopped Louisiana pecans**
- **¾ cup brown sugar**
- **¼ cup powered sugar**
- **¾ cup soft butter**
- **1½ teaspoon cinnamon (or to taste)**

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In an oiled 9-by-13 pan, spread apple filling and top with raisins and cinnamon. Set aside. In a large bowl, combine all other ingredients and mix until crumbly. Sprinkle evenly over prepared apple pie filling. Bake 20 to 30 minutes until top is brown. Serve hot or cold with ice cream or whipped cream. Serves 8.

Deep Dish Apple-Pecan Pie

- **8 cups peeled and sliced cooking apples**
- **½ cup light brown sugar**
- **2 tablespoons flour**
- **2 tablespoons water**
- **1 teaspoon cinnamon**
- **¾ cup Louisiana pecans, chopped**

Toss apple slices with brown sugar, flour, water and cinnamon. In a round 1½ quart greased casserole place the seasoned apples and sprinkle with pecans. Set aside. Prepare topping.

Topping

- **1 cup of flour**
- **1 stick of butter, softened**
- **1½ cups dark brown sugar**

In a bowl, blend all ingredients. Kneed, form into a ball and roll out to cover casserole dish. Cover apples with topping and bake in 350 degree oven for 1 hour, or until lightly brown. Serves 8.

Baked Apples With Pecans And Wine

- **8 apples, cored**
- **½ cup Louisiana pecans chopped**
- **½ cup cherry or strawberry preserves**
- **½ cup sugar**
- **½ cup mace or nutmeg**
- **1 cup red wine**
- **½ teaspoon vanilla extract**

Mix chopped pecans and preserves. Place cored apples in buttered casserole or baking dish. Fill each apple with pecan and preserve mixture. Set aside. Blend sugar and mace/nutmeg; stir in wine and vanilla extract. Pour over apples. Cover and bake in oven at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Chill 2 to 4 hours before serving. Serves 8.